

# FY 2003 Report of Accomplishments

## Chelan County Conservation District

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### Natural Resource Improvements in 2003 – Summary

- *Water quality has been protected and improved through implementation of Best Management Practices identified in conservation plans, as well as wildfire area reseeding and reforestation projects across the county.*
- *Fish and wildlife habitat and water quality have improved through replacement of eight culverts, resulting in reduced erosion, restoration of riparian areas and removal of fish passage barriers on Chumstick Creek.*
- *Future stewards of natural resources and potential cooperators on beneficial projects are being developed through information and education opportunities for youth and adults.*
- *With at least 12 active grant projects at any given time, the District continues to complete tasks ranging from planning and data collection to restoration work and removal of fish passage barriers, with an emphasis on water quality. These projects represent more than \$475,000 in funding administered in 2002 to benefit Chelan County residents.*



Bridge and stabilized channel on Chumstick Creek

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### Mission of the Chelan County Conservation District

*The purpose of the Chelan County Conservation District is to encourage stewardship and conservation of all natural resources for current and future residents in Chelan County by:*

- *Being an active advocate for wise land use and water management decisions.*
- *Promoting a reasonable approach to environmental problems.*
- *Providing local, voluntary, non-regulatory solutions to local environmental problems.*
- *Educating both adults and youth about natural resources stewardship.*
- *Monitoring and responding to future trends that affect the environment.*

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### Water Quality Implementation

- *Assisted landowners in reseeding 2,100 acres of private land after the Lake Chelan area Deer Point Fire. The District served as the point of contact for 150 landowners and secured landowner agreements for a joint rehabilitation project with the US Forest Service.*
- *Five Conservation Plans and two planting recommendations developed. Plans include 14 different Best Management Practices, ranging from 1/2 acre to 90 acres per practice.*
- *Eight Best Management Practices implemented, including one micro system irrigation upgrade (1 acre), irrigation water management (16.9 acres), nutrient management (57.9 acres) and pest management (72.5 acres).*
- *40 acres forest land replanted as a result of annual tree sale.*
- *Riparian plantings completed on one culvert replacement site and one county construction site.*
- *Support and assistance provided for the Local Work Group process identifying priority resource concerns and ranking information for federal Farm Bill programs. Information and assistance provided for EQIP signup; three informational meetings held; 120 landowners assisted; applications received from 98 cooperators. \$700,000 in federal funds was distributed in the region.*
- *Technical assistance, soils information and data provided to the public and various agencies.*

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### Basic Funding

- *Basic Funding is used to keep the doors open, with costs ranging from general supplies and office expenses to the mechanics of complying with laws and rules. Districts must conduct elections, hold meetings, develop and adopt budgets and plans, conduct evaluations and audits, maintain appropriate liability insurance, keep the public informed, and report employment, financial and operations information to a variety of agencies and entities, in addition to documenting, storing and safeguarding records. The space, materials and staff needed to accomplish these tasks are provided in part through basic funding.*
  - *By establishing a stable presence in the County, maintaining qualified staff and developing a reputation for successful completion of projects as well as compliance with audit standards, the District has been able to leverage considerable grant funds on behalf of the citizens. It is through these complementary projects the District has accomplished most of its on-the-ground activities.*
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## Local Funding

- An annual appropriation from Chelan County supplies about half the District's operating capital per year, for a total of about \$20,000. These critical discretionary funds provide the match necessary to qualify for state Basic Funding as well as supporting essential business expenses. This vital funding serves as the springboard from which grants, in-kind services and shared resources are coordinated on behalf of the local citizens.

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## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- Technical Assistance and Cost Share were provided on two projects (4.5 acres) for maintenance. Reliable follow-through on the existing contract commitments is considered very important to the reputation of both the District and the State, and may affect our ability to find willing landowners for future projects.

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## Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- Replacement of eight culverts included seven bridge structures and one new bottomless arch culvert that removed fish passage barriers on 2.7 miles of Chumstick Creek and improved access to 78 square miles of upstream habitat. The designs included habitat improvement, stream stabilization, bank stabilization and riparian restoration plantings resulting in water quality improvements. The project conserved funds and state resources by utilizing surplus concrete bridge decking made available through a transfer from the Department of Transportation to the Conservation Commission.

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## Small Farm Programs

- Conservation Plan development, overview and follow-up provided for 24 landowners.

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## Community Collaboration & Coordination

- Water quality, water quantity, habitat and instream flows are being addressed for the future of the Entiat Valley through the District's leadership role in Watershed Planning. At least six grant projects have been conducted to complement the planning work, including extensive data collection, compilation of existing information, habitat studies, stream flow modeling, habitat restoration projects and local landowner education and workshop sessions to assure effective collaboration with diverse groups. The Planning Unit includes at least 25 active core group members. Approximately 1/4 of these are landowners in the watershed. Regular mailings are sent to 180 interested parties, with periodic informational mailings to the 800+ residents of the watershed.
- The District coordinates the Water Quality Subcommittee for the Wenatchee Watershed Planning process, incorporating a significantly larger and more complex region than the Entiat Watershed. The District also has a grant to assist the Department of Ecology in collecting data and developing a Total Maximum Daily Load cleanup plan for the Wenatchee River watershed, along with encouraging landowner participation in the process and seeking early implementation of water quality protection and improvement practices.
- Mailings and meeting support are provided for watershed groups representing more than 700 households.
- Water quality will be protected in the future by the development of an agreement for native plant restoration on Chelan County public works project sites.



Entiat River rock vortex weir for habitat restoration

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## Information & Education

- Information and Education is a component of several different grant projects, with Implementation Grant funds supporting a significant share of these efforts. Educational programs conducted include Kids in the Creek, an intensive stream ecology program culminating in an outdoor field investigation (90+ high school students); Kids in the Orchard Industry, covering orchard management and operations topics from a water quality perspective (30+ middle school students), a periodic newsletter focusing on water quality issues (4,000 copies), a display at the Chelan County Fair (80,000 visitors), and an interactive display and educational activities for the four-day Wenatchee River Salmon Festival (10,000 visitors). Also provided are direction and assistance for high school students conducting water quality monitoring and presentations to high school and college groups on soils, conservation planning and natural resource issues.
- Meeting notice and water quality concern information provided to more than 300 residents of the Mission, Brender and No Name Creeks subwatersheds, requesting participation in a monitoring and evaluation study. Monitoring conducted on 23 private wells and six surface water locations as part of research into sources of fecal coliform and pesticide contamination in these subwatersheds.



Entiat River salmon nesting in a new pool

## Washington Conservation Districts

**Assisting land managers with their conservation choices**